

By Geoffrey P. Johnston

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Religious radicalism is on the upswing in Pakistan, posing a mortal threat to the Muslim-majority country's tiny Christian community. And an unjust blasphemy law is the weapon of choice for extremists determined to terrorize and kill the followers of Jesus Christ.

The rise of powerful Islamist groups in Pakistan is "very concerning" for Christians and other religious minorities in the south Asian country, says Knox Thames, who serves on the **United States Commission on International Religious Freedom**, an independent organization that advises the U.S. government on issues of religious liberty around the world.

"Extremist groups have shown a willingness to use violence to intimidate [and impose] their version of Islamic law and to create a society that supports their view of the world," Thames said in a telephone interview from his Washington, D.C. office. And the Islamist world view "is not one that respects human rights and religious freedom."